A DECLARATION of the people of GOD in ſcorn called QUAKERS, TO ALL MAGISTRATES AND PEOPLE.

FOraſmuch as it hath pleaſed God in his wiſdome which is Infinite, and by his power which is mighty, by them to the world unknown, within theſe few years to raiſe up & redeem to himſelf in this Nation a people to ſerve him in his own way, and according to his own will, that amongſt them he might make his Name known, and do for them great and terrible things amongſt the Nations where they ſhould come, their Laws, Worſhip, Man-

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ners and Language being diverſe from the laws, worſhip, manners and language of other people; By reaſon whereof, and of the falſe reports which the enemy of God, the lying ſpirit, which is in the mouth of the falſe prophets and miniſters of unrighteouſneſſe, they have been rendred odious unto the people, and loaded with reproaches and falſe accuſations, as that *they denied the Scriptures of Truth, the Church of God, the Worſhip of God, the Miniſters of Chriſt, and the maintenance belonging to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, the Ordinances of Chriſt, the Magiſtracy and Magiſtrates, and would deſtroy all government, and civil relations amongſt men*, with many ſuch falſe aſperſions: yea, ſo far did that lying ſpirit (for a time) prevail with many, that they thought if they killed us they did God ſervice; yea, ſo far hath it prevailed with many in places of authority, both Civil and Military, that they have counted us the off-ſcouring of the World, not fit for any thing, except it were to be the ſubjects upon whom they might exerciſe their cruelty, as our many cruel ſufferings in this Nation and others adjacent do manifeſtly declare, nothing almoſt befalling us in moſt Cities, Towns, Villages and Steeple-houſes, where we have come, but bonds, abuſes and impriſonments, inſomuch that ſcarce any Goal within this Nation into which ſome of us have not been caſt; beſides our being haled before Magiſtrates and Rulers, and our being drawn before the Judgement-Seats in this Nation, by whom we have ſuffered the impriſonment of our bodies, *many till death*, and the ſpoiling of our goods in ſuch an exceſſive manner as ſcarce hath been heard of before; And much of this ſuffering hath been occaſioned by thoſe men called *Miniſters* of Chriſt, which their fruits have now made them manifeſt not to be the Miniſters of Chriſt, but of Antichriſt; And for Tithes, a Popiſh inſtitution, brought in by the Apoſtates in the Apoſtacy, ſince the dayes of Chriſt and his Apoſtles ſet up, as more largely hath been in ſeveral papers publiſhed and declared for the good of all people whoſe hearts and deſires are after truth. And theſe things have we ſuffered in our Native Country by our country men, not by Biſhops and high commiſſion courts, but by & from ſuch as had a hand in putting down thoſe, as enemies to the peoples liberties, as men and as Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, and ſince have ſet up themſelves and one another in high places; but the Lord hath made them as ſlipperie to them as they were to the perſecutors before them; neither have theſe things before mentioned been done unto us for any evil we did unto them, but for conſcience ſake have we thus ſuffered; not for any tranſgreſſion of the Law of God, neither in truth of any wholſome law of this Nation, as may appear by the things for which in the general we have ſuffered; that is to ſay, many of us have ſuffered impriſonment, and other abuſes, for appearing in the Courts of this Nation in our own perſons, being thereunto commanded by Writs out of the ſaid Courts upon a great pain, to wit 100. *l.* a man, and becauſe we could not with freedom appear by an attorney; many more of us have been & are impriſoned in this Nation, for no other cauſe, then in truth our obedience to the command of Chriſt, who ſaith, *Mat.* 5. 34. 35. 36. 37. *Swear not at all, neither by Heaven for it is Gods throne, nor by the earth, for it is his foot-ſtool, neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the City of the great King, neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou can not make one hair white or black; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, for whatſoever is more then theſe cometh of evil*; And *Mat.* 23. 22. it is ſaid, *He that ſweareth by Heavem, ſweareth by the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon*; Now it is God that ſitteth in Heaven, which is his Throne, therefore Chriſt Jeſus, forbiding to ſwear by Heaven which is Gods Throne, forbideth to ſwear by God, or any other oath; then ſuch Judges or others that require perſons to ſwear, are in plain contradiction to the command of Chriſt, and in ſo doing, they do not judge for God, but for men. Neither have thoſe called *Barons of the Exchequer* any known Law of this Nation to warrant ſuch their actings, there being no law of this Nation, that requires any man to give his anſwer upon oath, to what his accuſer ſhall lay to his charge, neither is there any known Law in this Nation that doth give that Court of Exchequer any cognizance of ſuch cauſes as are for detention of Tithes; For it is ſaid, *No plea ſhall be holden or pleaded in the Exchequer, except it do ſpecially concern us and our Miniſters of the Exchequer.* The ſtatute of *Rutland* made, *May* 14. *Anno decimo, Edw.* 1 And whereas

it is alleadged, that it is the Rule or Cuſtom of that Court, that people muſt anſwer upon oath; It is anſwered, that that Rule or cuſtom which is contrary to Law is void, and amongſt the Churches of Chriſt there is no ſuch cuſtom as ſwearing; and therefore muſt needs be a Heatheniſh cuſtom which is vain, being contrary to the command of Chriſt, and another, from the Law of the Nation, or that maxim which ſaith, *No man is bound to accuſe himſelf.* Many others of us have been unreaſonably fined, impriſoned, and otherwayes perſecuted (for that is perſecution, when any man doth ſuffer for doing that which is good in obedience to God, and for refraining from that which is evil) for keeping their hats on their heads in a Court, or before a man called a Juſtice. Now there is no Law of God, or of this Nation requireth ſuch a thing as the putting off the hat, at the command of a Judge or Juſtice; for the hat as well as a cap is a covering for the head, not onely for the woman, but for the man alſo; and where there is no Law, there is no tranſgreſſion: And if it be ſaid, *It is due to the Magiſtrate by cuſtom or uſage of the Nation*; It is anſwered, The cuſtoms of the Nations or people are vain, *Jer.* 10. and Iſrael was commanded of God, not to learn the cuſtoms or manners of the Nations or Heathen whom the Lord caſt out of *Canaan* before them; and all cuſtoms or uſages which are contrary to reaſon are void in Law; and amongſt the Churches of Chriſt there was never ſuch a cuſtom, neither is it according to the Scripture (which the Judges and Juſtices and others call the Rule for Chriſtians to walk by) to put off the hat in a Court or before a Magiſtrate. And if it ſhould yet be ſtood upon, *The putting off the hat as a thing indifferent*; It is anſwered, He that is offended when the hat is not put off, when he expects it, or requires it; to him, and in his account, it is not a thing indifferent; For then is a thing truly indifferent to a man, when a man regardeth not whether he have the thing done to him or not. And others of us have been impriſoned for ſpeaking that which was to us revealed, and required of us by the Lord God (the higheſt power) unto a man called a Miniſter, or to a people in a Steeple-houſe or Temple made with hands, wherein God dwelleth not; but in his

people

people, whose bodies are his Temple, God doth dwell, and is known in his Sanctuary, where his voice is heard, and his will and word obeyed rather then men who would limit the Spirit of God to times, places, and persons; but their neither was, nor is any such custom amongst the Churches of Christ; where, *If any thing* was or *is revealed to him that sits by, the other is to hold his peace*, and so *all may prophesie one by one*; *for the Spirit of the Prophets is subject to the Prophets.* Again, many of us have suffered many wayes for no other cause then meeting together in the fear of the Lord, to wait upon him and to worship him, upon the first dayes of the week; Others of us have been turned forth of our imployments in the Nation, both civil and military, and rendred uncapable of such or any other imployment in a Common-wealth, upon no other account, but because we were *Quakers* (so called) or could not deny the people called *Quakers*, although we had in faithfulness served this present Parliament, & our Countrey in our several imployments whilst we were permitted to continue in them; And of late in the great Assembly and Counsels of this Nation, we have been represented (by some) to be a people, not onely to have unchristian'd, but also unman'd our selves, as if we had made our selves uncapable of any imployment wherein we might be serviceable in the Nation, thereby endeavouring to render us not onely odious, but also useless in a Common-wealth.

But for the clearing of the truth of God, as it is in Jesus, and for the manifesting of the secret deceits of our enemies, and pretended friends, in humility and meekness of mind, we do declare unto all; That by the receiving *the gift of God, the Light of Christ Jesus*, & it obeying in our hearts, which giveth knowledge and understanding to the simple, we are not thereby made uncapable nor unwilling to serve our Country and Country-men in the lowest employments and places that are any ways tending to the thing that is just, and to the suppression of that which is evil, or to the procuring good unto our Countrey, Countrey-men and Neighbours amongst whom we sojourn; Neither do we deny, but bear our witness too, and of the Scriptures of truth, and the Church of

God, and the Worſhip of God which is in the Spirit and in the Truth; and the Miniſters of Chriſt we own, and their maintenance, which is free, and the Ordinances of Chriſt they are eſtabliſhed amongſt us, all which are known by the Light of Chriſt that ſhineth in the heart, and the higher powers we are ſubject unto for Conſcience ſake, and Magiſtrates and Rulers who are not a terrour to good works but to the evil, are by us owned and honoured in the Lord, which honour ſtands not in flattering titles, or bowing the knee, and putting off the hat; but in due and ready ſubjection to all juſt Commands, according to the Apoſtles Doctrine, *Honour all men in the Lord, and ſubmit your ſelves to every Ordinance of man for the Lord ſake*; Now that which ſtands in the Lord, and is done for the Lords ſake, muſt be in that which is good, and not in that which is evil, for evil is not in the Lord; for he that doth evil, he hates the Light, which is good, and he that hates that which is good, doth nothing for Chriſts ſake; and by the Light of Chriſt which ſhineth in our hearts, we are taught of God to love as Brethren, to obey our Parents after the fleſh, husbands are taught to dwell with their wives according to knowledge, and wives to ſubmit themſelves unto their husbands as unto the Lord; ſervants to be obedient to them that are their Maſters, and all to ſubmit themſelves one unto another in the fear of God. Neither do we deſire that to our ſelves, which we do not freely give and allow unto others; to wit, *Liberty of Conſcience*; knowing that every man muſt give an accompt unto God for himſelf, yet we deſire the good of all men, which we know cannot be enjoyed by any man whilſt he lives in ſin and wickedneſs; Neither dare we practiſe, nor allow that in our ſelves, which we witneſs to be evil in others; Neither do we with-draw our ſhoulders from the yoke, or lay burthens upon others to eaſe our ſelves, but are *made free in the Lord, and in our ſpirits* to ſerve our Countrey and Countrey-men in all things that are Juſt, in the things that are honeſt, in the things that are e ual, and in the things that are of good report, amongſt thoſe that truly fear God; ſo we are not *ſtraitned in our ſelves* by the Spirit of the Lord, *nor limited by the truth*, from being ſerviceable in our generations; but *we are ſtraitned*

by

by unreasonable men, and limited by that spirit that rules by unrighteous lawes, popish customs, and mens own wills, which stands upon oaths, hats, cringings, and against plainness of speech; and will not suffer the servants of God to exercise their gifts, and reprove sin in the gate.

So it is not we that have either lost our reason, unman'd or unchristian'd our selves, being known in our Countreys to be men having reason and understanding, (though we have laid aside childish things) living and walking in a good conversation as men and Christians, by whose example many have been turned unto God, and have blessed God for us in the day of their visitation.

Therefore let all tongues be silent before the Lord, and his people, who are no oppressors, nor imposers upon mens Consciences, nor devourers of Gods creatures upon our lusts, nor time servers, nor men pleasers, neither for advantage do we admire mens persons, nor after earthly honours or preferment do we covet, *which whil't some have coveted after, they have made shipwrack of Faith, and of a good conscience*: But the good of all people do we seek after, and truth and justice, and sincerity and a holy conversation, and a *pure Religion and Worship of God*, which is in the *Spirit* and in the *Truth*, (which the Devil and will-worshippers are out of) and in that we are to glorifie God, and serve our generation; And all in justice, and oppression and oppressours, unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and all false wayes and false worships, and false ministers, & false maintenance, & false churches & false tongues we utterly deny, and bear our Testimony against with one accord, mouth and spirit, and all persecutors who abuse the power of God, which is for the praise of them that do well, and turns the sword backward, *strengthening* the hands of the evil-doers, *such were alwayes blind, and were justly cast-thrown by the hand of God*, which comes upon them when they are high and proud, and in their ambition forgets God, the Lord by his hand suddenly overturns such, and layes them low with the valleys, and sets the valleys above them. Read

this

this in this Nation, and do not forget the hand; for who doth, by that hand will be laid low again; But they that rule and ſtand in the power of God, they anſwer the juſt principle of God in every man.

Subſcribed in the behalf of our ſelves and the reſt of our friends, who are of one heart and mind with us.

John Crook
Edward Byllynge
Dennys Holliſter
Will. Gandy
Rich. Ward
Antho. Pearſon
John Hodſon
Robert Duncon
Amor Stoddart
Tho. Moor.
Richard Hodden
Geo. Benſon
Geo. Watkinſon
Tho. Aldam
John Pennyman.
John Fry.

THE END.

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